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## EDITORIALS†

### C. M. A.'S SIXTY-SIXTH ANNUAL SESSION

**President Edward M. Palette Becomes Past President: President-Elect Howard Morrow Assumes Office as President.**—The current, May issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will be in press while the meetings of the sixty-sixth annual session of the California Medical Association are being held, so that it will not be possible, through the printed page, to give convention news other than the Addresses of the Retiring and Incoming Presidents. Component county societies should, therefore, ask their delegates to make reports at the May meetings. Comments on the proceedings and official minutes will appear in the June number of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL.

On the evening of Wednesday, May 5, Dr. Edward M. Palette of Los Angeles, former Speaker of the House of Delegates and, during 1936-1937, president of the California Medical Association, will have laid down the responsibilities of the presidential office, his place being taken by the president-elect of last year, Dr. Howard Morrow of San Francisco. In expressing appreciation of the services which the retiring president, Doctor Palette, has rendered to organized medicine in the years gone by, the Association turns to welcome his successor, Doctor Morrow of San Francisco, whose faithful performance of duty on the professorial staff of the University of California's Medical School and as president of the California State Board of Health, is ample warrant, as he takes up his new work, of a successful administration to come.

\* \* \*

**President-elect is Dr. William W. Roblee of Riverside.**—There cometh also unto us, in a different rôle than has been his in the recent past, a new president-elect, who is none other than Dr. William W. Roblee of Riverside, California, a graduate of Cooper Medical College, Class of '95, and who, as a laborer in the vineyard of organized and scientific medicine, has long enjoyed the highest esteem of colleagues from all portions of the State. He gives up his duties as Speaker of the House to assume new responsibilities, and how well he will fulfill these with credit to himself, his

†Editorials on subjects of scientific and clinical interest, contributed by members of the California Medical Association, are printed in the Editorial Comment column which follows.

many friends know. The Association, therefore, extends to him its congratulations and good wishes.

In the June issue, full reports of the 1937 annual session meetings will be given.

### DENTAL SURVEY OF SAN FRANCISCO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN: A COMMENDABLE REPORT

**Facts Concerning the Dental Survey of San Francisco Elementary School Children.**—Recently there came into our hands a copy of the "Dental Survey of San Francisco Elementary School Children," a Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, having, as its legal or public sponsor, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, through Dr. J. C. Geiger, and, as its contributing or co-sponsor, the San Francisco Dental Society, through Dr. Ernest Sloman, Survey Director. This survey, conceived in November, 1933, was put into operation on August 17, 1934, and the report, brought off the press in October, 1936, was carried out under the supervision of James B. Sharp, Ph.D., Coördinator of Statistical Projects in California; the final summary making a compact brochure of twenty-one pages of text, tables and graphs, set up in typewritten form.

\* \* \*

**Why Attention Is Called to It.**—Attention is called to this report for several reasons: first, because it is in line, regarding contents and presentation, with what one would expect from such a survey report; secondly, because the California Medical Association, as co-sponsor of the California Medical Economic Survey, has itself already had an expensive and unpleasant experience in a work project of somewhat similar nature which, with the California State Board of Health, it took up in good faith, only to see its search for accurate knowledge concerning sickness costs of California citizens take on controversial sidelights because of the improper orientation of one or more lay individuals, whose services had been engaged to supervise the collection and compilation of the statistical information gathered by the clerical force and field workers; these misguided persons seemingly being under the impression that they were the beginning and end of the survey, instead of only being hired to do supervisory work and statistical compilation that would establish factual data from which the legal sponsor (the California State Board of Health) might indicate its interpretations and conclusions. It is quite possible that at the California Medical Association Del Monte session (only two weeks away) the matter will be discussed, and that delegates will be able to carry back to the component county societies the story of how thirty-five thousand dollars of the Association's funds were expended by its appointed lay experts, and what kind of report is at last being submitted in manuscript form.

**What Was Done With a Bulky Report.**—Several paragraphs in the Dental Survey report, here referred to, may indicate why it was carried through to successful completion with fair promptness; the opinions expressed being worthy of reflection, when one would consider the delays which were met with in the California Medical Economic Survey:

A great deal could be written regarding dental infection, the nature and importance of caries, diet, dental research, preventive dentistry, and other related problems, *but this formal report is intent upon one major problem, i. e., reporting what was found on this federally subsidized survey as clearly and as briefly as possible.* . . . (Italics our own. Editor.)

\* \* \*

*A preliminary bulky report prepared by the project supervisor, Mr. Harries, was submitted and has been completely redrafted (Parts A and B) by Dr. James B. Sharp, Coördinator of Statistical Projects for the Works Progress Administration in California. In this report only such data are utilized as were tabulated on the project. The concluding remarks appearing in Part C were prepared by Dr. Ernest Sloman.* . . . (Italics our own. Editor.)

\* \* \*

**Significance of Dental Caries in Childhood.**—From the concluding remarks by Ernest Sloman, D.D.S., the following significant comments on facts elicited by this survey of San Francisco school children are also worthy of consideration by dentists, physicians and the public:

The problem of dental caries is a challenge to civilization. Unless and until science develops a preventive formula or an individual whose contribution to mankind has the same effect on our fight against caries (as did Jenner's discovery on the prevention of smallpox), we can use only those measures afforded by dental science to eliminate or control the most prevalent, and by far the most expensive disease that man knows of today. A careful study of the disease and the facilities available in civilized countries for its control, indicates that the disease can be controlled. The tardiness with which these facilities are employed is nearly wholly responsible for a devastating waste of our most precious possessions, health and vitality. . . .

\* \* \*

We can make little or no progress towards increasing the percentage of American people with clean, healthy mouths, until the people, as well as the profession, learn and appreciate that the investment of comparatively small amounts of time and money for dentistry during childhood and youth adds years of health and comfort and, in most instances, eliminates the necessity for large and costly dental restorations in middle life and during the years of decline of physical vitality. . . .

\* \* \*

The control of dental caries, which is probably the most expensive and extensively devitalizing disease that mankind has today, lies in promoting public appreciation of the following facts: (1) that the cost of dental care for the individual can be reduced by providing early and adequate attention to the teeth, and (2) that, although dental caries is apparently a localized disease of childhood and youth, it is a primary or initial lesion involving painful, expensive, lingering or protracted diseases of old and middle age. . . .

\* \* \*

**Federal WPA Instructions Which Should Have Been Observed in the California Medical Economic Survey.**—Before leaving this subject, attention may likewise be called to a letter, dated March 22, 1937, sent by Dr. James B. Sharp, Coördinator of Statistical Projects, to the Direc-